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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 001794

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KTIA](#) [KCRM](#) [CJAN](#) [AG](#)
SUBJECT: POSITIVE JUSTICE MINISTRY FEEDBACK ON MLAT
DISCUSSIONS

REF: A. STATE 142342
[1](#)B. STATE 164172

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas F. Daughton for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) In a December 9 meeting Mohamed Amara, Director General of Judicial and Legal Affairs at the Ministry of Justice, was enthusiastic about the November 19-21 expert-level discussions in Washington on a possible Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) (ref A). DCM delivered the points contained in ref B, emphasizing the positive feedback we received from Washington about the discussions, and told Amara that the U.S. response to the Algerian proposal would likely come by February 2008.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Amara stressed that a framework agreement on legal cooperation between the U.S. and Algeria would greatly facilitate other forms of cooperation, including "informal" cooperation. Addressing the issue of police-to-police cooperation specifically, Amara said that the assurances he gave in Washington were still valid. He confirmed that, with an MLAT, police-to-police cooperation would become much easier. Amara expected that the number of formal requests for assistance under an MLAT would be very small. In any event, he noted, all potential requests from the Algerian side would pass through his office first, and they would ensure that the requests were legitimate and required the formal mechanism. Most requests, he predicted, would be dealt with informally, through a phone call or similar contact. This was Algeria's repeated experience, he observed, under similar arrangements with countries like France.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Amara also said that Algeria was moving in the right direction concerning the training and conduct of its police, noting human rights seminars organized by his ministry for the investigatory police (police judiciaire). "The police are there to serve the people," Amara stressed, and part of the reform of the Algerian justice system involved teaching the police to understand their proper role. He added that the MOJ was eager to have American legal experts, to include delegations of American judges, visit Algeria and that the Algerian government was willing to pay the expenses of the experts once in-country.

[1](#)4. (C) COMMENT: Amara was clearly very favorably impressed by the quality and content of the discussions in Washington. He also reiterated his government's strong interest in pursuing an MLAT negotiation process. He was virtually adamant in his reassurance that informal, police-to-police cooperation would be possible without resorting to the formal mechanism of an MLAT, though he did stick to the GOA bottom line that some kind of bilateral agreement is a necessary prerequisite to any such cooperation.

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